Steve Trombulak, Biology and Environmental Studies, Celebrates 25 Years

When Steve Trombulak accepted a position to teach “Vertebrate Biology” and “Vertebrate Natural History” for the Biology Department 25 years ago, he had never been to Vermont except for his interview. “It was a big move across the continent,” Steve recalls. As a conservation biologist and vertebrate ecologist, he was excited by the opportunity. “There weren’t a whole lot of jobs in my field back in the mid-1980s. I felt fortunate to be offered the job. Middlebury College was an excellent place to settle down with my then-wife Dorothy and raise our kids.”

After his arrival, Steve did not have much time to settle down. His first year at Middlebury College was a hectic one. Their first child, Sage, was born in January. He was then appointed the Director of the Environmental Studies program, a fairly young program at the time that needed much attention. “I was in my first tenure-track position, my first child was born, and I became the Director of the Environmental Studies program. I don’t remember much from that year. I was fairly sleep deprived.”

The Environmental Studies program at Middlebury College, one of very few programs nationwide at the time, dates back to 1965. Steve recalls now the enormous opportunity that was presented to him by this appointment. “I didn’t have any previous experience as an administrator, but I knew in my heart that the program had the potential to be really great and important. It was a good time both nationally and at Middlebury College to revitalize the program. There was a lot of interest among the faculty, students, and administration for a strengthening of the program. So I and a small group of faculty put our shoulders to the wheel and got the program moving again. Colleagues like John Elder and Chris Klyza were workhorses. We were able to put Environmental Studies on a new trajectory so that it could grow again. By the mid-‘90s, we launched dozens of new initiatives, hired faculty, and began developing plans to build what would eventually become the Franklin Environmental Center at Hillcrest.”

Steve stresses the rapid and constant change that this field has experienced. He (Article continues on page 3)
MILESTONES

Milestones are determined by years of uninterrupted employment at Middlebury College. The following milestones were attained in September 2010:

### 5 YEARS
- Andrea Solomon  
  *Museum of Art*
- Keith Bishop  
  *Public Safety*
- Megan Bouvier  
  *Dining Services*
- Stefan Comack  
  *Public Safety*
- Suzanne Cota  
  *Athletics*
- Virginia Deering  
  *Dining Services*
- Francisca Drexel  
  *Film and Media Culture*
- James Fitzsimmons  
  *Sociology / Anthropology*
- Maria Hatjigeorgiou  
  *Religion*
- David Hurlacher  
  *Economics*
- Blair Kloman  
  *Communications*
- Linda White  
  *Women’s and Gender Studies*

### 10 YEARS
- Natasha Chang  
  *Commons Office - Brainerd*
- Gregg Humphrey  
  *Education Studies*
- Robert Prasch  
  *Economics*
- Julie Rheaume  
  *Registrar’s Office*

### 15 YEARS
- Pieter Broucke  
  *History of Art & Architecture*
- Miguel Fernandez  
  *Spanish and Portuguese*
- Brigitte Humbert  
  *French*
- Peter Matthews  
  *Economics*
- Michelle McCauley  
  *Psychology*

### 20 YEARS
- Carole Cavanaugh  
  *Japanese Studies*
- Jule Emerson  
  *Theatre*
- Michael Field  
  *Facilities Services*
- Christopher Klyza  
  *Political Science*
- Susan Perkins  
  *Psychology*
- Erin Quinn  
  *Physical Education*
- Alison Rimmer  
  *Theatre*
- Timothy Spears  
  *Academic Affairs*
- Neil Waters  
  *History*

### 25 YEARS
- Penny Campbell  
  *Dance*
- Tamar Mayer  
  *Geography*
- Kevin Moss  
  *Russian*
- Ellen Oxfeld  
  *Sociology / Anthropology*
- Stephen Ratcliff  
  *Physics*

(Milestones continue on page 3)
Congratulations on reaching these Milestones!

Steve Trombulak, ctd. from page 1

estimates that very few schools hosted an Environmental Studies program in 1985. “Now every place has some sort of environmental program.” Yet today, the Middlebury College Environmental Studies program is one of the leaders in the country. “We are very aware that we are the place that others look to when launching an Environmental Studies program to learn what to do or what not to do. Frankly, if we’re not moving forward, we’re falling behind. All of us here are very committed to the program. We recognize how dynamic the field is – it needs constant attention to remain on the cutting edge, to define the cutting edge.” Although always looking forward, Steve is conscious of the strong sense of history in the program. “The last member of the original founders just passed away. Now I’m one of the old annoying guys that always goes on about how it was in the old days,” Steve laughs.

(Article continues on page 4)
Steve Trombulak, ctd. from page 3

Although the intention at the time of his hire was for him to devote 100% of his time to the Biology Department, by the mid-’90s he was splitting his time evenly between Biology and Environmental Studies. His original course “Vertebrate Natural History” is still in the roster a quarter century later. Steve notes, “Twenty-five years is a long time in the sciences. Topics for both classes and research programs in the sciences evolve rapidly.” When he first began work at Middlebury College, his current research focus, conservation biology, “hadn’t yet even been defined professionally.”

Steve describes conservation biology as a field that “uses various sciences, especially ecology, genetics, and systematics, to design and implement tools for protecting and restoring the life on Earth.” For Steve, this has translated into a present-day focus on landscape-scale conservation planning or “looking at entire landscapes – such as the Appalachian Mountains – and exploring where to best target conservation actions.”

The course that stands out most for Steve is “Vertebrate Natural History” which is entirely field- and lab-oriented. There is no traditional classroom lecture. “We are out in the field banding birds at 6:00 a.m., four days a week. My colleagues can’t believe that I actually get students up and out in the field that early in the morning. Yet the class is always full with a waiting list every year. This class is so different from anything else that I do.” Steve recalls the burden the intensity of this course placed on balancing family life with early morning bird banding and field trips every weekend at the beginning of each semester. Although his children are grown now, Steve can recall loading his young kids in the car at 5 a.m. to go bird banding.

It is this course that produced one of Steve’s lasting memories. “Almost all of my best memories involve being in the field with students. I still remember one morning at the banding station. The sun was coming up behind us, and everything was perfectly still. As we were looking out at the field, we see a red fox come bounding out of the ground fog hunting rodents, a hawk circled overhead, and a Great Blue Heron flew right over us. There was a collective gasp from the students as they took in the beauty and preciousness of what they were seeing.”

All of the work has been worth it, as Steve enjoys his memories of three decades of students and seeing what they have accomplished professionally. He remembers a particular professional conference when, while standing in line for refreshments at a social event, he reunited simultaneously with three former students, one from each of his decades with the College. He recalls another conference when his presentation was book-ended by two former students, each now prominent conservation biologists in their own right. “Here I am, an undergraduate teacher – a foot soldier in the trenches – and two of my former students are part of this symposium. It elevates the level of satisfaction as an educator to one of sheer joy.”

Although very dedicated to his work as a conservation biologist, Steve is also a musician. “I spend a lot of time with people who love to make music. We don’t have a band that books gigs where people come to see us perform. Instead we have a small community of people who all play many different instruments together. We spend a lot of time at drum and dance festivals. There are no audiences, we’re all engaged.” Steve’s current partner Josselyne is involved as well. “She is an ethnomusicologist at St. Michael’s College, and a great musician. I’m really just a biologist who plays music – drums, percussion of all kinds, and didgeridoo.” Steve and Joss spend a great deal of time traveling to festivals and hosting fellow musicians in Vermont. “Most of my network of friends is associated with that community. It’s a lot of fun.”

Steve’s second child, Ian, was born in 1990. Ian is currently enrolled at Middlebury as a Psychology major with double minors in History and Education Studies. Ian wants to be a high school history teacher and/or a guidance counselor.

He also writes for The Campus. Steve jokes sarcastically, “I have no idea why he thinks teaching is a meaningful profession.”

When asked what the next 25 years hold for him, he states that he hopes to continue the conservation planning work that has been his primary focus for the past ten years. In the next ten years, Steve plans to expand the scope of this work by creating conservation planning tools that are strongly rooted in science but allow the public to be part of the planning process. He will continue to work to develop decision support tools that allow stakeholders to be involved in a process that is still grounded in science. Feeling that the issues are so desperate, Steve would like to expand his efforts to the entire Appalachian Mountain chain, to focus on “real conservation planning for the 21st century.” In 15 years, Steve sees himself “drumming around a fire somewhere, playing with my grandchildren if any were to come along. Fundamentally, I really, really love teaching. I can’t imagine not doing it in some way or another. When I retire, the thing that I’ll miss the most is being with students.”

(Article continues on page 6)
Notes from Staff Council

I want to congratulate all members of all the Staff Council Districts. I think good choices and some good luck have worked together to provide the staff with council members who work well together and even better independently.

Our October meeting will be an open meeting in McCullough Social Space and will provide an opportunity for an update on the activities of the Staff Resource Committee (SRC). The date is October 13 and the start time is noon. Vice President Tim Spears will chair a forum discussion of the SRC. Come learn about where we stand with staff consolidation plans and other activities of the committee. What the SRC does is important and their decisions impact all employees. You want to attend. Come if you can.

There is a survey that should be coming your way about the time you receive this issue of MiddPoints. It is something you should be able to complete within a few minutes. Please take the time to do it. We are seeking information that we suspect may bolster MCSC discussions with the Trustees this October.

Already this year MCSC has initiated an educational program for staff. We are calling it Learning Lunches. The representative of District D, Ben Bruno, volunteered to organize speakers to present educational programs at brown bag lunch meetings. The first one has already taken place and involved faculty from the Language Schools who provided short tutorials in conversational French, Italian, and Chinese. I attended and found it surprisingly stimulating. For lunch that day, high school French forged a few new paths in my grey matter. Check for announcements of future lunch programming.

Contribute to our BLOG. Go to the MCSC page and click the link to our blog. This is a place for you to share with us ideas you think would make things better at Middlebury College or a place for you to read what others think.

~ Wayne Darling, MCSC President

Arts Season Ready to Begin!

Tickets for the 2010-2011 Performing Arts Series go on sale to Middlebury College ID card holders on Monday, September 6. That’s a week ahead of the general public! Stop by the two Box Office locations (Mahaney CFA or McCullough) to get your tickets while the best seats are still available. Or buy online at http://go/tickets (from off-campus: http://go.middlebury.edu/tickets).

September Arts Highlights
All events free! Learn more at www.middlebury.edu/arts

• An Evening of Improvisation and Experimental Electronic Music
  Featuring Peter Hamlin, Kareen Khalifa, Mark Christensen, and more
  Thursday, September 9, 8:00 p.m., MCFA Concert Hall

• Film: The Ghost Writer
  Directed by Roman Polanski; starring Ewan MacGregor and Pierce Brosnan
  Saturday, September 11, 3:00 and 8:00 p.m., Dana Auditorium

• Fall Dance and Movement Classes
  A variety of dance, yoga, pilates, capoeira, ballet, and hip-hop classes are open to the College community, starting the 1st and 2nd week of classes. Visit go/dance for details (from off-campus: go.middlebury.edu/dance)

• Blues Weekend:
  Mark Lavoie, harmonica
  Friday, September 17, 8:00 p.m., MCFA Concert Hall
  Paul Asbell, guitar
  Saturday, September 18, 8:00 p.m., MCFA Concert Hall

• Film: 35 Shots of Rum
  French film focusing on a long-widowed African immigrant and his beautiful daughter
  Saturday, September 18, 3:00 and 8:00 p.m., Dana Auditorium

• Film: Bright Star
  Based on the three-year romance between 19th-century poet John Keats and Fanny Brawne, Bright Star is the latest film from Jane Campion (The Piano).
  Saturday, September 25 (rescheduled from Oct. 9), 3:00 and 8:00 p.m., Dana Auditorium

• “Dancing in a Pool of Gray Grits”
  Imagining The Body in the Japanese Dance Form Butoh
  Guest lecture by Bruce Baird, Assistant Professor of Japanese at the University of Massachusetts Amherst
  Monday, September 27, 4:30 p.m., Robert A. Jones ’59 Conference Room

• Exhibition of Architectural Works by Brian MacKay-Lyons (September 30 - October 14)
  Based in Halifax, Nova Scotia, MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects is a leading proponent of critical regionalism architecture, which strives to use a building’s geographical context to create identity and a sense of place.
  Johnson Building

• “Some Observations on 25 Years of Collecting Art for a College Museum”
  Lecture by Museum Director Richard Saunders
  Thursday, September 30, at 4:30 p.m., Dana Auditorium

Museum exhibitions:

• Moving Images: Works from the Permanent Collection of Photography and Video Art
  (September 3 - December 12)

• Friends Bearing Gifts: 40 Years of Acquisitions from the Friends of the Art Museum
  (September 17 - December 12)
One-on-One Coaching from EFAP

Did you know that Middlebury College’s Employee and Family Assistance Program offers One-on-One Coaching for the following?

- weight loss
- fitness and exercise
- managing chronic conditions
- quit smoking
- stress management
- pre- and postnatal care
- menopause

Are you or is someone in your household looking to start living a healthier lifestyle? You may want to lose weight, quit smoking, or maybe you want to get healthier for the baby you’re expecting. Your EFAP Program offers One-on-One Coaching by telephone with a trained and certified coach to provide guidance and encouragement. To get started, call your EFAP and tell them you would like to enroll in a Healthy Start Coaching program today. Let EFAP help you get personalized telephonic coaching today to help you live a healthier tomorrow.

They’re just a phone call away ...
800.828.6025
24 hours / 7 days a week

Or access your EFAP website for additional subjects and suggestions:
www.WellnessWorkLife.com

Faculty Grants

Grace Spatatafora (Biology) has been awarded her second R01 research grant from the National Institutes of Health to continue her work on Streptococcus mutans, a major culprit in the development of dental cavities. This grant includes funding to support for 12 undergraduate research assistants over the next four years as well as scientific equipment, travel to conferences, laboratory staff, and research supplies.

Switchboard Swap!

This summer, the daytime switchboard made a move from the Public Safety Office to the Mahaney Center for the Arts. This allows the Public Safety staff to focus on their core work, and gives the Mahaney CFA’s Box Office a boost in customer service capability. Employee Melissa “Missey” Thompson made the move with the switchboard in July. So when you dial “0” from on-campus (Monday-Friday, 8 A.M. – 5 P.M.), you’ll now be calling the MCFA. Stop by and say hello to Missey in her new location!

Steve Trombulak, ctd. from pg. 4

When asked about the highlight of the past 25 years, Steve names the Environmental Studies program without hesitation. “I am blessed that I was able to help the program come back to life and grow to be one of the best in the country. I’m blessed to be in an institution where every segment seems to get the importance of strong environmental programs both in the curriculum and in facilities management. Every part of the College, from first-year students to the Trustees, truly gets the importance of what we do here with Environmental Studies. A day doesn’t go by that I’m not reminded how lucky I am to be here. I was given the opportunity to be creative and apply my science in a way that matters. I can’t imagine another setting that I can have such diverse and committed colleagues.”

Steve recalls his original expectations of Middlebury College. As a graduate student and instructor at the University of Washington, his prior experience had been growing up in California, part of a blue-collar family. “I had no concept of the private liberal arts college. That was not big in the West. I went to UCLA with 30,000 other students and then attended graduate school at the University of Washington, another large university. One day I saw an ad for this place called Middlebury College. I had never been to Vermont, never heard of Middlebury. I didn’t know anything about liberal arts colleges. I told a senior member of the faculty [about the new position], and he was beside himself with glee. ‘Oh Stephen — you will love it! You’ll have lunch with philosophers!!’ I laughed at this state-ment. Little did I know, it was actually true! This is a wicked awesome place for someone like me to be. I have lunch with philosophers, write books with political scientists, design curricula with economists, and sit in meetings with historians, chemists, and geologists. This is the catbird’s seat!”

~ Laura Carotenuto
Classifieds

Classifieds are free for members of the staff, faculty, student body and alumni of Middlebury College. Ads must be submitted seven days prior to the publication date. Guidelines for ads can be found on the MiddPoints section of the HR Website. Please send ads to Classifieds, MiddPoints, HR, Service Building, or e-mail to middpoints@middlebury.edu (electronic submissions preferred).

Misc.

For Sale: 3 wood bookcases, dark walnut finish; 31.5” wide x 41” high x 10” deep; $30 each or all three for $75. Wood futon bed frame, $50. Older Panasonic color TV, 24” diagonal; works perfectly with cable or dish TV, $50. Call Linda at 388.4243 or lschiffe@middlebury.edu.

For Sale: Firewood, $250 a cord, delivery possible. Approx. 3 cords avail. Call 802.349.4052 for more information.

For Sale: Lawn tractor, Jacobsen GT12 lawn tractor with hydrostatic transmission. Lawn mower deck and 42” snow blower attachments. Good working condition. Come see and make an offer. Call Mark at x5424 or 388.0334.

For Sale: 2 cell phones. One is a Samsung SCH-a930, $20. Other is an LG VX9300, $25. Switched carriers. E-mail nnccbbn2@gmail.com if interested.

For Sale: PUR water system - two brand new filters, 1.5 gallon container for fridge. $25 with filters. E-mail nnccbbn2@gmail.com.

For Sale: Bitty Baby - sweet American Girl brand baby doll. $20. E-mail nnccbbn2@gmail.com.

For Sale: Real film 35 MM SLR Camera. Minolta MAXXUM 5 with 28 to 80 zoom lens. Brand new condition. If you like real film, working in a real darkroom, this is your camera. $50. E-mail nnccbbn2@gmail.com.

For Sale: Folding black wire dog crate. Midwest LS-1360. Barely used, perfect condition. $30. E-mail nnccbbn2@gmail.com.

For Sale: Toshiba 13 inch TV w/ built in DVD player. Needs digital adapter or cable/sat hookup. $20. E-mail nnccbbn2@gmail.com.

For Sale: Beautiful solid-wood cherry TV hutch with pocket doors and drawer. 47” tall x 38” wide x 25” deep. $200. E-mail nnccbbn2@gmail.com.

For Sale: First Lab Microscope MFL-05 400x LED light model. Rarely used. Includes slide kit. Have a budding scientist? $45. E-mail nnccbbn2@gmail.com.

Real Estate


Free

Free: Wedding ring pillow (used once) and matching guestbook (not used). Embroidered off-white satin. Elegant and pretty. Hope someone else can use them. Write or call Carol at rifelj@middlebury.edu or 388.2051.

Wanted

Wanted: Seeking a used but in good condition wood Garden Way cart. Please call 462.3281.

Wanted: Looking for a gas stove – 30” wide. Does not have to be fancy, just entirely functional. Contact Kelly @ x5346, kgiard@middlebury.edu, 802.353.7000.

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Middlebury College Snow Bowl Ski Patrol Ski Sale

Saturday, Oct. 23, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday Oct. 24, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Crest Room, McCullough

Skis, bindings, boots, cross country ski gear, packs, snowboard gear, skates, bikes, snowshoes, and more.

Need extra cash? Drop off your gear to sell on Friday, October 22, from 3–7 p.m.

For more information contact Steve Paquette at 388.4356 or spaquett@middlebury.edu.

The College Bookstore

The College Bookstore is extending the Apple Promotion!

We are giving away a Free Printer with the purchase of a Mac until October!